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Flesh Peddling in Moscow

There's an unpublicized but important event that's not on the schedule of the Moscow Olympics: the entrapment of Western visitors by Russian prostitutes working for the Soviet secret police. And in this the Russians are after as many gold medals as they can hook.

Indeed, U.S. intelligence experts glumly predict that some West Europeans, or even Americans, with access to sensitive intelligence information, have already been caught in the lush toils of comely KGB agents they have met in the festive Olympic atmosphere. The danger comes when the unwary victim, blackmailed by the threat of embarrassing publicity or a one-way ticket to the Gulag Archipelago, agrees to spy for the Kremlin when he returns home.

Intelligence sources told my associate Dale Van Atta that it's a safe assumption that any Russian woman who makes sexual overtures to a foreigner — or who responds to such overtures — is working for the secret police.

The reason is as obvious as the Soviets' perennial housing shortage. As one source explained: "The girl can't take the John back to her apartment because of the relatives living with her. And the hotels are constantly watched. So any girl who does this successfully must have the protection of the police — or the KGB." If she has her own apartment — a rarity in Russia — she is certainly working for the KGB, he said.

A typical example of the Soviet badger game was the case of a vacationing American engineer who did top-secret research for an Air Force contractor. The compliant chipper startled him by screaming rape, and the cops came bursting in. The engineer spilled everything in the six-day interrogation that followed.

Another case involved the administrative aide of a U.S. senator. A toothsome young lady named Natasha was seated "by chance" at his table in a Moscow hotel, and a pickup followed. Natasha dragged him from store to store to buy presents for her, and casually got him to sell her dollars for rubles at the black market rate.

The Senate aide grew suspicious — partly because of her stunned reaction when he snapped her picture without warning — and told American Embassy officials about his affair. He was hastily sent home, where CIA debriefers assured him that he'd have been nabbed on currency exchange violations. He has been advised not to travel in Communist-bloc countries, where the secret police could snare him for the KGB.

The KGB flesh peddlers cater to all sexual preferences, the experts noted. They have homosexual men and women on their payroll, as well as gigolos who prey on susceptible foreign women.